

Commonwealth of Virginia
Department of General Services
Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services
Richmond, Virginia

Monkeypox Testing Instructions_FAQ

All testing MUST BE approved by the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) before testing can be performed at DCLS. Please contact your local Health Department for consultation.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a health advisory to notify clinical and public health authorities of a cluster of monkeypox cases in several countries. The first U.S. case of monkeypox has been confirmed in Massachusetts in an adult male with recent travel to Canada; additional U.S. cases are under investigation. Several outbreaks of monkeypox have been identified in the U.K., Portugal, and Spain. Not all cases have a history of travel to parts of Africa where monkeypox is endemic, or known epidemiologic links to other cases. The U.K. Health Security Agency reports that there might be community transmission of monkeypox occurring, particularly among men who have sex with men (MSM).

Laboratory testing for monkeypox is currently available at DCLS. For suspected cases, please coordinate with your Local or Regional Epidemiologist for testing approval **prior to submission at DCLS.**

Test Type	Specimen Type	Additional Information	Storage/Transport Conditions
Real-time PCR	2 - 4* - Dry swabs of lesions on different body areas Placed in separate dry, sterile tubes	No viral or universal transport media (no VTM or UTM)	Refrigerate specimens within 1 hour of collection. <u>Ship refrigerated on ice packs.</u>

* If multiple swabs are not received during the initial collection and the patient tests positive at DCLS, then multiple paired dry lesion swabs from different body locations are required for confirmatory testing, upon recollection.

Submission Instructions:

Include a completed DCLS Test Request Form for each patient to be tested. It is imperative that the following data accompany specimens submitted:

- 1) Outbreak code: **RAS989Monkeypox0522**
- 2) Complete submitter information
- 3) Patient name and date of birth
- 4) Specimen type/area(s) of body swabbed
- 5) Date and time of collection
- 6) Symptoms/onset date
- 7) Indicate **monkeypox testing** for "Other" testing
- 8) Travel/exposure history

Package specimens with both a primary and secondary container and send via routine DCLS courier. Additional courier arrangements can be provided, as needed.

Laboratory Points of Contact:

Name	Role	Contact Number
Dr. LaToya Griffin-Thomas	Bioterrorism/Special Pathogens Testing Lead	804-648-4480, x281
Destiny Hairfield	Bioterrorism Response Principal Scientist	804-648-4480, x154
Sean Kelly	Molecular Testing Laboratory Group Manager	804-648-4480, x227
DCLS Emergency Number	24/7 Mobile Number	804-335-4617

Monkeypox Testing Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. **What is monkeypox virus?** Monkeypox virus is a type of Orthopoxvirus, which also includes Vaccinia, Cowpox and Variola viruses.
2. **Does DCLS perform monkeypox testing?** DCLS, as a Laboratory Response Network (LRN) Advanced Laboratory, is able to perform testing for the presumptive identification of monkeypox virus using real time PCR (amplification) methods. **All testing MUST BE approved by VDH prior to the submission of specimens to DCLS for testing, and DCLS requires advance notification prior to submission.**
3. **Are the PCR/amplification methods commercially available?** No, the real time PCR methods utilized for poxvirus testing were fully evaluated and approved by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the LRN. These tests are provided to state public health, LRN reference laboratories.
4. **What tests are used to detect monkeypox?** Testing includes a Non-variola *Orthopoxvirus* and an *Orthopoxvirus* PCR test. The Non-variola *Orthopoxvirus* test detects commonly known Orthopoxviruses that infect humans (e.g. Vaccinia, Cowpox and Monkeypox viruses), **DOES NOT** detect *Variola virus*, the virus that causes smallpox; or Varicella Zoster Virus (VZV), the virus that causes chickenpox. The *Orthopoxvirus* test is utilized in conjunction with other poxvirus tests (e.g. Non-variola *Orthopoxvirus*) to determine overall infection with an Orthopoxvirus.
5. **Does DCLS provide testing for chickenpox?** Yes, testing for Chickenpox (Varicella Zoster Virus) can be performed as clinically indicated and/or requested by VDH.
6. **What is the acceptable specimen type for Monkeypox testing?** The acceptable specimen type is **multiple (2 – 4) DRY** swabs of lesions from different body areas **placed in separate sterile, dry tubes (No viral transport or universal transport media).** **Submission of multiple dry lesion swabs is REQUIRED** to ensure initial testing at DCLS and confirmatory testing at the CDC. **If two swabs are not received during the initial collection and the patient tests positive at DCLS, then multiple paired dry lesion swabs from different body locations are required for confirmatory testing, upon recollection.**
7. **How should specimens be stored and transported to DCLS?** Specimens should be refrigerated within 1 hour of collection and can be stored refrigerated up to 7 days before testing. Specimens must be transported to DCLS refrigerated on ice packs, and can be placed on the routine DCLS courier. Additional courier arrangements can be made, as needed.
8. **Are DCLS test results confirmatory?** Positive real time PCR results are PRESUMPTIVE positive for monkeypox only. Confirmatory testing is required at the CDC.
9. **What are the turnaround times (TATs) for testing at DCLS and the CDC?** DCLS test results will be provided within 5-6 hours from the start of testing. Testing will be initiated the same-day as specimens are received at DCLS. The CDC will provide confirmatory test results within 5-7 days from specimen receipt.